

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	:	
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Akiko HEMMI et al.	:	Group Art Unit: 1751
	:	
Serial No.: 09/887,345	:	Examiner: B. Mruk
	:	
Filed: June 25, 2001	:	
	:	
For: LOW-MOLECULAR (METH)ACRYLIC	:	
ACID (SALT)-BASED POLYMER AND ITS	:	
PRODUCTION PROCESS AND USES	:	

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

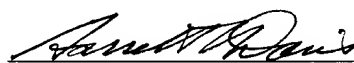
In the Notice of Allowance and the Examiner's Reasons for Allowance, several statements are made that could be interpreted as mischaracterizing the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully disagree with the statements.

The Reasons for Allowance states that U.S. Patent No. 6,444,771 to Yamaguchi et al. does not disclose a process for a low-molecular weight (meth)acrylic acid (salt)-based polymer that contains 100 to 95 mol% of a monoethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acid (salt) monomer that is added to the reaction system by drop-wise addition. Independent claim 1 recites this feature. However, independent claim 13 is directed to the polymer obtained by a polymerization process. The process of claim 13 does not recite adding 100 to 95 mol% of a monoethylenically unsaturated monomer by a dropwise addition. Therefore, this statement by the Examiner does not properly characterize the invention of independent claim 13 and the claims depending therefrom.

The Examiner's Reasons for Allowance also refer to Applicants Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.132 for showing that the polymers of Examples 1-1 to 1-5 of Yamaguchi et al. do not exhibit a clay dispersibility in high-hardness water of 0.47 to 0.60. However, independent claim 1 does not recite a clay dispersibility in high-hardness water so that this statement does not properly characterize the invention of claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully disagree with the statements in the Reasons for Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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